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JULIAN K. GORSKI

EUROPE AND THE GERMAN VOTE

ANNCR:

THE PAPER-THIN ELECTION VICTORY OF CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN LAST SUNDAY'S WEST GERMAN ELECTION IS PRODUCING SOME INTERESTING REACTION THROUGHOUT EUROPE AS WE HEAR NOW FROM VOA'S JULIAN GORSKI:

VOICE:

WEST GERMAN VOTERS MAY HAVE NOT CONTRIBUTED TO THE STABILITY OF THEIR GOVERNMENT BY RETURNING CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S SOCIALIST-LIBERAL COALITION TO POWER WHILE MAKING HELMUT KOHL'S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION THE STRONGEST SINGLE POLITICAL FORCE IN THEIR COUNTRY'S LEGISLATURE. BUT WHAT THEY APPEAR TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED IS TO GIVE SOMETHING TO OTHER EUROPEANS -- BOTH EAST AND WEST -- TO BE HAPPY ABOUT. FOR THE FRENCH, ITALIAN AND BRITISH SOCIALISTS IT WAS AN OBVIOUS RELIEF THAT SOCIALISM IN ONE OF WESTERN EUROPE'S LEADING NATION RETAINED ITS AUTHORITY -- EVEN THOUGH BY THE SLIMMEST OF MARGINS. THE CENTER-RIGHT POLITICIANS, ON THE OTHER HAND, TAKE HEART FROM THE HEAVY GAINS SCORED BY THE CHRISTIAN DEOMCRATS AND THEIR MORE CONSERVATIVE BAVARIAN PARTNERS IN THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL UNION OF FRANZ-JOSEF STRAUSS.

IN EASTERN EUROPE -- ON THE OTHER HAND -- COMMUNIST ADMINISTRATORS INTERPRET THE ELECTION RESULTS AS AN ENDORSEMENT OF THE OSTPOLITIK LINE DRAWN UP BY CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S PREDECESSOR WILLY BRANDT THAT LED BONN TO CONCLUDE TREATIES WITH MOSCOW, WARSAW AND PRAGUE.

CONCURRING WITH THIS OPINION, A TASS SOVIET NEWS AGENCY COMMENTARY ADDED THAT WEST GERMAN VOTERS ALSO HAVE GIVEN THEIR GOVERNMENT A NEW MANDATE TO PURSUE A "COURSE OF PEACE AND CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION WITH ALL STATES" -- REGARDLESS OF THEIR POLITICAL PERSUASION. AND IN WARSAW, A RANKING POLISH OFFICIAL SAID THAT POLAND HAD NO REAL QUALMS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING TO DEAL WITH A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION BUT THAT IT DOES FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE ABOUT MAINTAINING A DIALOGUE WITH THE MORE FAMILIAR SOCIALISTS.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, SOME DISSENTING OPINION IS ALSO BEING HEARD. A SPOKESMAN FOR THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT SAW IN THE ELECTION RESULTS A GROWING TREND OF DISENCHANTMENT AMONG WEST GERMAN VOTERS TOWARD BONN'S POLICIES OF EASING TENSIONS WITH THE EAST. AND THE YUGOSLAV COMMUNIST PUBLICATION, POLITYKA SPOKE OF THE EMERGENCE OF -- WHAT THE PAPER CALLED: A "CONSERVATIVE TREND" IN THE WEST GERMAN ELECTORATE.

LEFT IN AN APPARENTLY AMBIGUOUS STANCE WERE THOSE WHO HAD EXPECTED GERMAN VOTERS TO FOLLOW THE TREND SET BY THE SWEDES A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO WHEN THEY ENDED FORTY-FOUR-YEARS OF UNINTERRUPTED SOCIALIST RULE.

BUT EVEN THE SWEDISH-ELECTION INTERPRETERS HAD SOMETHING TO BE CONTENT ABOUT. THEY COULD SEE THEIR EXPECTATIONS CONFIRMED IN THE HEAVY GAINS SCORED BY THE WEST GERMAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS -- EVEN THOUGH HAVING TO CONCEDE THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S STRONG DOMESTIC POLICIES GAVE HIS SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ANOTHER CHANCE TO TRY TO MAINTAIN THEIR COUNTRY'S DOMINANT ECONOMIC POSITION.

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